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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - Nuclear Issues: Iran - North  
Korea Iraq - British Operation in Basra NATO  
PARIS - Wednesday, September 21, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

1. Nuclear Issues: Iran - North Korea
2. Iraq - British Operation in Basra
3. NATO

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

Le Monde prominently features an interview with A/S Dan Fried about the German elections, Europe and France's role in the negotiations with Iran. The interview is announced on the front page: "Dan Fried Thanks France." Inside, A/S Fried says: "The message of determination sent to Tehran by France was the message that needed to be sent." And on Europe: "An introspective Europe is not good for the world, no more than an isolationist America. We have the responsibility of working together for the good of humanity, not to look inward and make believe that our prosperity and democracy can exist independently, outside the world."

Iran, and North Korea's sudden turn-around on its decision to end its nuclear program are two major international stories. Liberation carries an op-ed by Therese Delpeche of CERI who wonders if the Americans might not have been too eager in accepting a text with "vague" wording, which in turn led to North Korea's turn around. (See Part C)

The NASA space program elicits an editorial commentary in Le Monde titled "The Moon Before Mars": "NASA is offering Americans a strange deal. A heavier budget . in exchange for a dream that might help to forget the nightmares of Iraq and Katrina." In its satirical column titled "the American Dream," Liberation comments: "Even the American dream has become hard to sell to a disillusioned public. And the dream of adding one more star to the American flag is more pathetic than exalting. Not so much because of the cost, but because of a quest for a dream in order to hide the bad taste left by Baghdad and Katrina. 'Apollo on steroids' is no joke. Once again, America under the influence is showing its muscle but it's just pumped up."

Several articles and editorials are devoted to the death of Simon Weisenthal and his relentless search for Nazi war criminals. Liberation's editorial comments: "If the international collective legal arm had done its job, his little homebred enterprise might not have been necessary. Simon Weisenthal proved that an individual could act in his own name and with little means to accomplish effectively what organizations and institutions could not accomplish, because they were either too cumbersome or weighed down by a double language." Catholic La Croix devotes its lead, editorial and several articles to "Justice Against Forgetfulness."

Le Figaro carries a report on the British operation in Basra to rescue its soldier. Adrien Jaulmes raises several questions about the relationship between the Iraqi police and the local militia. (See Part C)

In its op-ed pages Le Figaro carries an op-ed by Kofi Annan titled "The Glass Half-Full" previously published in its English-language version, and an op-ed by Michael Hanlon of the Brookings Institute on NATO, titled: "Let's Not Expect Too Much From NATO." (See Part C)

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

Nuclear Issues: Iran - North Korea

"The Agreement That Wasn't"  
Therese Delpeche of CERI (European Center for International Research) in left-of-center Liberation (09/21): "An American expert on Monday, carried away by his enthusiasm cried 'victory in the Korean Peninsula.' Twenty-four hours later the 'victory' had turned into a quarrel. Was the American negotiator too quick when he accepted the vague wording of the first point in the agreement, accepting to leave for later the

details of the light water nuclear plant? It is legitimate to ask this because Washington was quick to retort that what this meant was: after the dismantling of the North-Korean nuclear sites. Whereas Pyongyang clearly said that Washington should not even dream of it unless it first delivered the plant. This is what happens when one is too eager to reach an agreement with a partner known for its turn-arounds... After two years of negotiations the skies cleared as if by magic and a Chinese diplomatic breakthrough was announced. But China's primary objective is not to settle the North Korean issue, but to prolong the discussions and avoid a major crisis with the U.S and/or Japan. In short, negotiations will continue but it is too early to cry victory."

"Tehran Threatens"

Left-of-center Liberation (09/21): "The tone is escalating between the Iranians and the Europeans. In a very harsh draft resolution, the EU is asking the IAEA to bring the Iranian nuclear issue before the UNSC, without mentioning sanctions, and accused Iran of 'violating' its commitment. As a response the Iranians are threatening to withdraw from the NPT and to limit their oil supply to any country that would oppose Iran in this dispute."

Iraq - British Operation in Basra

"A Commando Operation in Basra"

Adrien Jaulmes in right-of-center Le Figaro (09/21): "The complete impunity which surrounded the delivery of the two British soldiers to the militia by the Iraqi police and the level of street violence against the British tanks suggest that the alleged calm in the Shiite regions of Iraq remains doubtful. The incident is one more worrisome sign of the degrading situation in Basra, which had until now been spared the violence spreading in the rest of Iraq. It also stands as proof of the growing influence of the radical militia led by Moqtada al-Sadr. Because of a situation that is increasingly looking like an Iraqi civil war, because of a central government overwhelmed by events, the Shiites are increasingly turning to religious militia for protection. According to certain sources, the local police forces in Basra are completely controlled by al-Sadr's men."

NATO

"Let's Not Expect Too Much From NATO"

Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institute in right-of-center Le Figaro (09/21): "While it is indisputable to say that NATO has indeed a future, it is less easy to ascertain how the organization could become more effective, politically or militarily. NATO has its merits, but also its weaknesses. These are not to be considered as failings but rather as a result of its inherent limitations, due to an organization based on integration of conventional military power. NATO has not contributed to a coherent western response to terrorism. It is not equipped to deal with the Iranian and North Korean nuclear issues. In the U.S., where NATO is considered as indispensable, everyone is equally aware that NATO is limited in its capacity to deal with certain problems. It is obvious that NATO has done little in Iraq. First and foremost NATO is a military alliance whose main objective is to protect its members. The Atlantic Alliance may try to do something in Sudan and the Congo. Its non-American members may improve their military forces. But to expect more from NATO is to misinterpret the nature of the organization and presume of its capabilities." STAPLETON